

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 SANTO 05192 222123Z

63

ACTION ARA-20

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 5192

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EAGR, DR

SUBJECT: THE PRESIDENT, THE ARMED FORCES, CIVIC
ACTION AND AGRARIAN REFORM

REF: SD 5184

1. DURING THE CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT BALAGUER REPORTED
REFTEL, THE SUBJECT TURNED TO THE ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN
THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC. THE PRESIDENT SAID HE FOUND THEM
MANAGEABLE AND PLIABLE. IT WAS ESSENTIAL, HE CONTINUED, FOR ANYONE
GOVERNING THE COUNTRY TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE ARMED FORCES WERE
PROUD OF THEIR INSTITUTION AND JEALOUS OF THEIR PERQUISITES. AS
LONG AS THEY DID NOT FEEL THREATENED BY THE PRESIDENT AND WERE REASON

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ABLY SATISFIED WITH THEIR SHARE OF THE "SPOILS", THEY WOULD BEHAVE.
HE MENTIONED ADMIRAL JIMENEZ, SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE ARMED
FORCES, GENERAL PEREZ Y PEREZ, ARMY CHIEF, AND GENERAL LLUBERES,
CHIEF OF POLICE, AS REASONABLE MEN. (COMMENT: IT IS NOTE-
WORTHY THAT HE DID NOT MENTION GENERAL NEIT NIVAR AMONG THE
GROUP, AN OMISSION THAT VERY LIKELY WAS NOT AN OVERSIGHT.) THE
TASK AHEAD, HE THOUGHT, LAY IN CONTINUING TO EDUCATE THE ARMED
FORCES IN THEIR ROLE AS GUARANTORS OF THE CONSTITUTION, WHILE
KEEPING THEM REASONABLY CONTENT AND OUT OF POLITICS. HE
SEEMED OPTIMISTIC THAT THIS COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED.

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PAGE 02 SANTO 05192 222123Z

2. I RECOUNTED TO THE PRESIDENT MY BRIEF EXPERIENCE IN VISITING

AGRARIAN REFORM PROJECTS AND MY PRELIMINARY FAVORABLE IMPRESSION OF WHAT I HAD SEEN. HE DESCRIBED THE INITIAL RESISTANCE HE HAD ENCOUNTERED IN GETTING THE PROGRAM OFF THE GROUND, BUT FELT THINGS WERE NOW MOVING ALONG AND THAT WHAT HE CONSIDERED AN "ESSENTIAL REFORM PROGRAM" WAS UNDERWAY WITH LITTLE POLITICAL FLAK. I INQUIRED WHETHER THE ARMED FORCES MIGHT NOT THROUGH ITS CIVIC ACTION PROGRAM IMPROVE ITS IMAGE BY PARTICIPATING IN THE AGRARIAN REFORM PROGRAM, FOR THERE WERE MANY SOLDIERS AND A NUMBER OF PIECES OF ENGINEERING EQUIPMENT IDLE. THE PRESIDENT WAS TAKEN WITH THE THOUGHT AND ASKED WHETHER SOME OF THE FUNDS GENERATED BY PL 480 SALES COULD BE USED. I REPLIED THAT CIVIC ACTION FOR AGRARIAN REFORM PURPOSES FELL WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF OUR AGREED USE OF SUCH FUNDS. HE CONCLUDED THAT HE WOULD TRY AN INITIAL EXPERIMENT BY ASKING THE ARMED FORCES TO BUILD SOME FARM-TO-MARKET ROADS IN THE REGIONS WHERE THE AGRARIAN REFORM PROGRAM MOST NEEDED THEM.

HURWITCH

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